***Integrating Differentiated Instruction & Understanding by Design***

**Chapter 1**

In chapter one of *Integrating Differentiated Instruction & Understanding by Design*, we learn about the differences and similarities of differentiated instruction and understanding by design. We see how they both work and how they are used in a classroom together. By providing specific examples, and different situations we are able to see the different types of planning and consideration that go into teaching with differentiated instruction and understanding by design.

It is very important to consider where a student comes from, what their background is like and what knowledge they are bringing to the classroom. By knowing where students are starting in the class, as well as background knowledge of how they learn and what works best for them, this is incorporating the differentiated instruction into teaching. By then designing a curriculum and assessments that fit all types of student’s needs, this incorporates the understanding by design aspect into teaching.

It is essential that both of these models are used in tangent. If only differentiated instruction is used, then there is no action for the consideration that was given for the student’s needs. If understanding by design is solely used than there is no careful consideration of how and why a curriculum should be designed and implemented.

In my classroom both models will be extremely helpful. In a math classroom students come in with vastly different knowledge and willingness to learn. By doing things such as pre-assessment, I will be able to gauge where students are starting and what students may need extra help or modified work. Also by talking to previous teachers and discussing how students did in previous years will give me the background I need to help make them successful in my classroom.

**Chapter 2**

In chapter two of Integrating *Differentiated Instruction & Understanding by Design,* the main focus is about understanding students and what kind of supports they need in the classroom. Students come from all types of backgrounds and at any time may have something going on in their personal life. It is a teacher’s job to identify what supports a student may need and how they can help the student to get the most from the classroom. If a student is not doing well in class a teacher needs to investigate why that may be, and work with the student to help them achieve more.

One of the biggest challenges I suspect I will face in my classroom is the mindset students come to the classroom with. With such a negative outlook on math, I will already have many challenges to overcome. I will have to identify what works best for students to learn and what I need to do to help students be successful. Keeping an open mind about learning styles is going to be key in this. In math it is very important that a student understands a concept before moving on to a new concept, because in a lot of cases one concept builds off of another. One thing I found in the book that I think will help with this is having a question at the end of class that students must answer to leave the classroom. This question will be directly related to our current work and will help me judge if I need to spend more time on concept with the whole class, or if I can move on.

In any classroom identifying student needs and addressing them is essential to ensuring students learn what they need to from the classroom.

**Chapter three**

In chapter three of Integrating *Differentiated Instruction & Understanding by Design,* we are introduced to the concept of standards. These standards are set forth by the government to ensure that students are learning the material that they need to at the correct time. They are meant to ensure a student’s education experience is at the level it needs to be while also regulating schools in the same state. While standards are meant to be a good thing there are parts of them that can be tricky for a teacher, such as the number of standards that they are required to teach in a given year. There can sometimes be too many standards that teachers are expected to teach, there is just simply not enough time in the school year for all of them. Even with the expectation that a teacher may not be able to hit all standards in a school year, there is still the daunting task of how to get through as many standards as possible while still making sure students are actually learning the material. By focusing on a big picture, and smaller essential questions teachers can more accurately help students understand the material.

In a math classroom the application of this idea is very important. In any given year in a student’s math education there are going to be multiple rules and formulas that students will need to understand. To try to hit all the standards teacher can simply rush over concepts, give students a formula and tell them to memorize, test them and move on. However by doings this students will not absorb the information. It will require careful consideration and planning to ensure that students will retain pertain information, as well as the use of big ideas and essential questions.

**Chapter four**

In chapter four of *Integrating* *Differentiated Instruction & Understanding by Design,* we are faced with the realization that teachers are not just responsible for teaching students our academic content. We also need to be aware that we are shaping children into adults and teaching them skills and concepts that they will take with them for the rest of their lives. It is our responsibility that we think of them as human beings and not just a number or a statistic. With this concept in mind it becomes easier for teachers to connect with the students and to ensure that they learn the material and understand it.

Once this idea is adopted by a teacher they can then start to think about how they will teach different types of students so they will be successful in years to come. One fear that I have had about becoming a teacher is how will I meet standards that I need to, while giving students the supports that they need, while also being fair to each student. One thing I enjoyed in this chapter is that the answer is not to give students who are more advanced more work, and give students that need more support less work. This would only create a huge rift in the classroom and could possibly make students not try as hard to get less work. One solution to this would be instead of giving more or less work, give the same amount but the difficulty can differ. If students all have a worksheet of 20 problems, but with difficulty at their own level, it will ensure that students learn the content knowledge that they need, that they are challenged the right amount, and that they all are doing the same amount of work.

**Chapter five**

In chapter five of *Integrating* *Differentiated Instruction & Understanding by Design,* the main focus is assessment. Backward design tells us that it is best to start with assessment and decide how and what students will be assessed on. By thinking of the end result first it allows teachers to then create lesson plans that will prepare students for this ultimate goal.

When thinking about what teachers want to assess their students they need to take into account the standards that are required and what they want to focus on. When it comes to the how, this is where a teachers knowledge of their students’ needs to come in. If a teacher knows what intelligences the students excel in and which they do not, it would beneficial for the students and the teacher to use this to their advantage. Students would be happier because the teacher is truly thinking about them and how they succeed. For the teacher it will allow them to accurately judge if students have mastered the concept or not.

Standardized test are not completely a terrible idea. The concept behind this testing is sound, however the execution is what is lacking. Standardized test now force teachers to spend more time on material students will be tested on, instead of something that could be more important. These tests also do not take into account different student’s needs, so while they do produce some results they are not as accurate as a different assessment could be. A teacher’s assessment who has taken into account the students would be much more accurate and helpful for students and teachers.